



OUR BODIES

By

Ben Klebanoff

WHY I LIKE IT: Drama Editor EZRA NEIGHBORS writes...

Content may disturb. Reader discretion advised. *“We are in unprecedented times” -said everyone everywhere sometime before in already unprecedented times.*

But with over 500+ anti-LGBTQIA2+ bills introduced in state legislatures in the U.S. alone THIS YEAR, and 200+ specifically targeting trans and non-binary people. This is truly unprecedented times indeed, but let it not sway you from the simple fact:

Trans and non-binary people are people.

Trans and non-binary people need love, compassion, understanding, empathy, and all those other mushy gushy human characteristics that every human being is entitled to.

Alright, my soapbox rant is over— to the review.

Playwright Ben Klebanoff’s Our Bodies exceptionally delivers the unique challenges of finding love in a romantic partnership, belonging within a family (blood-related or chosen), as well as love within our own body. Challenges cisgendered, trans, genderfluid, and everybody outside and in-between can relate to.

Five Stars

Our Bodies

By Ben Klebanoff

ARTIST BIO:

Ben Klebanoff (he/him/his) is a playwright and social worker living in Manhattan. Ben believes that the self is an act of storytelling, and that the more types of stories we have available to us, the more whole we will be. So, he writes a lot of weird gay stuff. Like this play.

CHARCTERS:

| | |
|---------|---|
| WILL | 21, trans man. STAZIA’s older brother. |
| STAZIA | 17, cis girl. WILL’s younger sister. |
| JEREMY | 22, cis man. WILL’s crush. |
| ABBIE | 17, cis girl. STAZIA’s best friend. |
| GARRETT | 17, cis boy. STAZIA’s on again off again something. |

HARRY STYLES Mid-twenties, cis man. English singer/songwriter, former member of One Direction. Sort of.

MOTHER Late 40s, cis woman. WILL and STAZIA's mother.

A NOTE ON GENDER:

Will is a transgender man. He was assigned female at birth (**AFAB**). This means that when he was born, the doctor said he was a girl, and he was given a girl's name and raised as if he were a girl. But in high-school, Will realized that he was really a boy. That he was transgender. At the start of this play, Will has largely completed his **social transition**—coming out, changing how he dresses, cutting his hair, changing his name and pronouns, and starting to wear a **binder** to flatten his chest. But he is still working on his **medical transition**—hormone replacement therapy (**HRT**) and various surgeries. Will is about 8 months on testosterone (“**T**”), and is planning for **Top Surgery**, to surgically flatten his chest. For more on the effects of testosterone, and the second puberty it induces for post-pubescent trans-masculine people, you can read here:

<https://transcare.ucsf.edu/article/information-testosterone-hormone-therapy>.

Will is attracted to men, which makes him gay.

Will should be played by a trans-masculine actor—a trans man or AFAB non-binary person. This role is available to trans-masculine people at any stage of medical transition, or even to someone who does not intend to medically transition at all.

There is transphobia depicted in this play, but I've chosen to never **deadname** Will (i.e. call him by the name he was given at birth, his “deadname,” rather than by his chosen name, Will), nor to ever **misgender** him (i.e. use she/her pronouns for him, call him miss, etc.). Please do him (and all trans people) the same courtesy in rehearsal and in discussing the play.

CONTENT WARNINGS:

Depictions of transphobia and internalized transphobia. Depictions of anxiety and panic attacks. Discussion of gender dysphoria. Discussion of abortion. Discussion of child abuse.

SCENE 1

(At various, dynamic locations around the stage, stand the men of the play, doing a rhythmic choreography of exercise. Heavy breathing and grunting, exposed arms and legs—there's something erotic and performative about it.)

WILL stands downstage center, away from the action, in a loose-fitting t-shirt and shorts)

WILL

If you want to understand men, go to the gym. It's almost masturbatory, how these gym bros worship at the temple of their own bodies. But to be fair, what's a modern liberal American man supposed to do? If he's anti-war and a feminist, there's no one left for him to assert his manhood over. Alexander wept... and went to the gym. When you exercise, you get to conquer your own body—push it past its limits and mold it to your will. You become the battlefield, and you get to suffer, and you get to win.

I guess everyone I know, in some way or another, is trying to conquer their own body.

I'm not exempt, obviously. But I usually run in the park. I hate the gym. I hate being seen. And, I get distracted.

(He looks around at the choreography of straining men)

I mean, is this gay, or is it just me?

(JEREMY stops his exercise and approaches WILL)

JEREMY

Hey.

(WILL almost jumps out of his skin. He steps back against the dumbbell rack)

How's it going?

WILL

(putting on a slightly deeper voice) Good, yeah, I'm just taking a break.

JEREMY

Hey, do your thing. You won't see me judging. Can I...

(He gestures with a dumbbell towards the empty spot on the rack, directly behind WILL)

WILL

Oh yeah, sorry.

JEREMY

No worries.

(WILL moves and JEREMY puts the dumbbells back on the rack)

WILL

35s, huh? Nice.

(WILL does a take out to the audience, like, why the HELL did I just say that?)

JEREMY

If you're not doing anything, you want to come spot me?

WILL

I was about to start some kettlebell stuff, but yeah, I could come spot you.

JEREMY

Sure you were.

(He claps WILL on the shoulder, and turns to walk towards the squat rack, where he starts loading the bar to do some bench presses. WILL marvels for a moment at being touched. Then he addresses the audience)

WILL

I don't usually go to the gym. But Jeremy invited me. And, well... *(he glances upstage towards JEREMY)* you get it.

(He follows JEREMY to the bench and sets up on the other side of the bar to spot JEREMY. JEREMY finishes loading the bar, and lays down on the bench)

JEREMY

Okay, I'm going to do 5 reps.

WILL

Cool.

(JEREMY lifts the bar off the rack and starts pressing. WILL spots for him, holding lightly onto the bar. He addresses the audience:)

WILL

Don't get me started on spotting. Now I get why guys in the 40s got their war buddies' names tattooed on their asses.

(JEREMY starts struggling, making strained noises. WILL snaps his attention back to him)

WILL

You've got this, three more.

*(While WILL is talking to JEREMY, STAZIA enters from SL, in pajamas, with a bowl of cereal. She is not in the gym. She is in WILL's apartment. **The spaces in WILL's life overlap, as his life unravels and converges at a breakneck pace.** But only WILL, and occasionally STAZIA, can see across them. STAZIA slumps across the stage)*

JEREMY

I don't know—

WILL

I've got you, let's finish this out.

(JEREMY pushes through the rep)

Good, one more.

(JEREMY lowers and starts back up for the last rep. He's failing.)

JEREMY

Shit.

WILL

I've got you I've got you.

(WILL helps JEREMY pull up and put the bar back on the rack.)

At DSR, STAZIA opens a fridge we couldn't quite see before, and ponders its contents.

JEREMY sits up and exhales deeply)

JEREMY

Thanks dude.

WILL

Anytime.

(JEREMY extends his hand, and WILL gives him a high-5, that lingers)

JEREMY

You want to take a turn?

(STAZIA, still looking into the fridge, calls from across the stage, without looking over)

STAZIA

Wait, so, you're into dudes now? Is that a hormone transition thing?

WILL

(hearing STAZIA but ignoring her) Nah, I'm good. Maybe next time.

JEREMY

Next time? Am I gonna turn you into a gym rat, Little Will?

STAZIA

(snorting) Little Will? Are you sure this guy is gay?

WILL

We'll just have to wait and see, won't we?

(JEREMY gets up to grab his gym bag)

STAZIA

Wait—does he need to be gay or straight for you to date him?

(WILL steps out of the gym world into the apartment)

WILL

Close the fridge, you're driving up the electricity bill.

STAZIA

He needs to be gay, right?

(WILL closes the fridge)

Hey. I need milk for my cereal.

WILL

We're out. Eat it dry.

STAZIA

Why don't we have milk?

WILL

Be glad you have cereal, squatter.

(STAZIA stomps back across the stage, annoyed)

STAZIA

He's too hot for you anyways.

(She exits. WILL turns to look back at JEREMY, who is guzzling down water. JEREMY spots WILL watching him, stops drinking, wipes his mouth, and waves. WILL waves back, embarrassed. JEREMY turns to leave the gym, and will collapses against the fridge)

WILL

Fuck.

SCENE 2

(WILL and STAZIA are eating dinner. Packaged ramen. The kitchen table is small and cramped. The energy is awkward)

WILL

How was school today?

STAZIA

Fine.

WILL

Fine?

STAZIA

Yeah, fine.

WILL

Did you learn anything?

STAZIA

That school blows and we all end up dead no matter how many As we get.

WILL

You did *go* to school today, right?

STAZIA

Oh my god that was one time.

WILL

You didn't ditch and go to the park with your friends?

STAZIA

No, I went to school, *mom*.

WILL

So if I check your snapchat story I won't see you and Abbie posing next to some weird mushrooms or something?

(She glares at him)

Should I check?

STAZIA

All my classes after lunch suck.

WILL

That doesn't mean you can just skip them, Stazia.

STAZIA

Thanks for your concern.

WILL

If you ditch too much the school is going to call mom and dad, that's all I'm saying.

STAZIA

Then maybe they'll make me come home and you won't have to deal with me anymore.

WILL

That's not what I want.

STAZIA

Mm but you kind of do, a little.

WILL

I've got your back, Staz. I'm not going to let that happen.

STAZIA

Yeah, sure, ya big turd.

(This is affection from her. They eat in companionate silence)

Hey, do you get The Nod now?

WILL

The Nod?

STAZIA

I saw a TikTok about it—like how men nod to each other in public. Like they're part of a secret club or something.

WILL

Like when two men pass each other on the sidewalk?

STAZIA

Yeah.

WILL

Yeah, I get the nod. But I kind of always have.

STAZIA

Cool, that's kind of nice, right?

WILL

Yeah, I guess it is.

STAZIA

If I make eye contact with a man in public, he either looks away or he *keeps looking*, you know?

WILL

Do you feel uncomfortable walking from your bus-stop?

STAZIA

Don't make it a whole thing—it's fine.

WILL

It doesn't have to be fine.

STAZIA

Do you still get your period?

WILL

What?

STAZIA

Don't have a heart attack I'm just curious.

WILL

No, the hormones stop that.

STAZIA

Damn maybe I should take testosterone.

WILL

You can take birth control to control your period, you know.

STAZIA

I know.

WILL

And for, you know, birth control.

STAZIA

Did your period ever make you, like, super nauseous?

WILL

No not really.

STAZIA

I threw up after lunch. I didn't really feel like going to class.

(STAZIA won't look at him. He can see she's hurting. He softens)

WILL

How are you feeling now?

STAZIA

It just hurts. And the nausea comes out of nowhere. It's never been like this before. Is it supposed to be like this?

WILL

It's worse for some people than for others. Did you take some advil?

STAZIA

I'm just worried.

WILL

Take some advil.

STAZIA

I did.

WILL

Do you want me to call your doctor?

STAZIA

No.

WILL

You could get checked out for endometriosis if you're really—

STAZIA

Ew, no, I don't want to go to the doctor.

WILL

Okay, okay.

STAZIA

What's endometriosis?

WILL

It's a thing that happens with uterus stuff in the, uh, fallopian tubes, when—

STAZIA

I'll google it, I'll google it.

(She sees the period stuff is making him uncomfortable)

You must hate having me here.

WILL

I don't hate having you here.

STAZIA

You're so boy crazy but you have to spend all your time with the biggest girl you know.

WILL

Who says I'm boy crazy?

STAZIA

You're always texting that Jeremy guy.

WILL

Texting one boy doesn't make me boy crazy.

STAZIA

Yeah, but you *are*.

WILL

And you're not?

STAZIA

Shut up.

WILL

How's Garrett?

STAZIA

(going cold) Actually shut up about it.

WILL

But he's sooooo cuuuuute.

STAZIA

(actually upset) Fuck off.

WILL

Okay, okay.

(They eat in tense silence. WILL's not sure what he did wrong)

SCENE 3

WILL

About three months on T, it hit me: men are everywhere. You go to the post office, there they are. You go to the grocery store, there they are. You go to work, they march single file up to your register and then right out the door. I know that sounds obvious, but it's like I'd never really seen them before.

They tell you taking testosterone will make you horny, and you think it's all blood rushing through your body and getting turned on at work when you're restocking corn chips—and it is that, okay, sometimes it is that, but it's more than that. Before I came out as trans, I was never one with my attraction to men, it was all theoretical. It didn't really make sense. I thought I was a lesbian for a while, but it's not like I was ever really into women. I just wasn't into this experience of being a woman in a world of men, like you're on stage all the goddamn time.

But once I came out and I started passing, and my hormones were making me all aware, the script flipped. Now I was the watcher. I had this moment, at the gas station 6 months ago, of sudden visceral kinship with gay men everywhere. Like, oh, we walk among them, but we are not quite like them. We watch them, and they look right past us. We desire them, and we fear them, and constantly, constantly, we search for each other. It was a lonely feeling and a feeling of belonging all at once. And it made *sense*. Finally. All these years I played these mind games to try to make my life make sense, but this made *bone* sense, you know? You couldn't have found it in a book, or by talking to a friend, or by thinking yourself crazy. It just *happened* to me.

And all because I was watching this guy in a trucker hat filling up his car and I thought: God, he looks like an asshole. I want to fuck him.

SCENE 4

(ABBIE and STAZIA are chilling on a couch in ABBIE's basement. The basement takes up a small corner of the stage, while WILL sits in the kitchen of his apartment, working on his laptop. The spaces in STAZIA's life overlap, as her life unravels and converges at a breakneck pace. But only STAZIA, and occasionally WILL, can see across them.

ABBIE and STAZIA are mid conversation and a little giggly.)

ABBIE

It's kind of weird.

STAZIA

Just tell me.

ABBIE

I like it when a guy does things he's not supposed to do, you know?

STAZIA

Oh, like a bad boy?

ABBIE

No, like, when a boy gets all sleepy and he stretches and his shirt rides up and his tummy is showing and he's kind of chubby, you know?

STAZIA

Perv.

ABBIE

Or when he pigeon-toes his feet a little when he gets nervous. Or he's, like, a painter and he doesn't like sports.

STAZIA

Is this about that senior in your art class again?

ABBIE

It's not *just* about him. I'm saying I don't find the cool, tough guy act that attractive. I know it's what guys are *supposed* to do, but it's just so 1950s.

STAZIA

Don't be such a fake feminist, I've seen painting class guy.

ABBIE

Okay, *maybe*, I like that act, but I also like when I can see hints of this... softness underneath the hard shell. I think all boys really want is to get to be soft. It just makes me want to...

STAZIA

Peel them like a crab?

ABBIE

(laughing) Yes, exactly. What about you?

STAZIA

What do you mean?

ABBIE

What do you find attractive in a guy, or whoever? What makes you go insane?

STAZIA

I would go absolutely bonkers if I could pass history this semester.

ABBIE

Come on Stazia, I spilled my guts for you.

STAZIA

Really. I'm taking a break from all that.

ABBIE

Oh my god get over Garrett and move on already.

STAZIA

(uncomfortable) It's not something I can just get over.

(ABBIE realizes the impact of what she said)

ABBIE

I didn't mean... I meant like *Garrett*, like actually *Garrett*, not what happened with—

STAZIA

I know what you meant, Abbie. I just don't feel very fun and sexy right now.

ABBIE

Right, of course. Sorry.

STAZIA

It's fine.

(An awkward pause)

STAZIA

Hey, could I sleep over tonight?

ABBIE

Oh. I totally would love to have you, but you know how my parents are.

STAZIA

Could you ask?

ABBIE

They don't really do short notice. Unless it's an emergency again?

STAZIA

Not an emergency. I just don't know how much longer I can stay at my brother's without my parents finding out.

ABBIE

They don't know?

STAZIA

Not exactly.

ABBIE

Where do they think you are?

(STAZIA is silent)

They don't think you're *here*?

STAZIA

Well, I *am* here.

ABBIE

But you're not *staying* here.

STAZIA

Could I be?

ABBIE

What if your mom had called my parents? Or stopped by?

STAZIA

She hates your parents.

ABBIE

Hey.

STAZIA

What? I love your parents, I'm just saying.

ABBIE

What's your plan, Stazia? How long are you going to keep this up?

STAZIA

I don't know, Abbie, I just figured you'd have my back.

ABBIE

I *do* have your back I just don't know what I'm supposed to tell my parents.

STAZIA

Well boo hoo join the fucking club.

(beat)

I'm so insane I'm sorry I'm so mean to you.

ABBIE

You're not insane.

STAZIA

Every day I wake up and I can't possibly imagine how I'm going to do a whole day, but I do the day anyways, and I go to bed—I go to sleep on Will's stupid lumpy couch—and I wake up and I do it all over again. Is this what life is, Abbie? Just feeling furious and spent all the time?

ABBIE

I don't know.

(ABBIE feels for her friend but she doesn't know what to say. Neither does STAZIA)

STAZIA

Can your dad drive me back to Will's, at least?

ABBIE

I'll go ask.

(ABBIE gets up and goes offstage upstairs to talk to her dad. STAZIA hangs her head in her hands.

Still looking at his laptop, WILL calls from across the stage:)

WILL

Hey, Staz, come look at this.

(STAZIA doesn't look up)

STAZIA

What?

WILL

Just come take a look.

(STAZIA groans, but gets up and walks over. He turns his laptop to face her)

Check out all these babysitting jobs.

STAZIA

Ew, barf.

WILL

Some of these people will pay like 30 dollars an hour.

STAZIA

Don't you already have 2 jobs?

WILL

I'm not looking for me.

STAZIA

Oh my god you're worse than dad.

WILL

Ouch.

STAZIA

You know what I mean.

WILL

I'm not saying you have to get a job—

STAZIA

Good cuz you can't say I *have* to do anything.

WILL

—*but* I do think it could help you get your feet under you, if you're really serious about moving out from mom and dad's.

STAZIA

And, what, cuz I'm a girl I'd love to take care of stupid babies all the time?

WILL

You love kids. Like 10 year olds, you love those kids.

STAZIA

So what?

WILL

So, I thought you might like getting paid to hang out with them.

STAZIA

What parent would want me around their kids?

WILL

(sliding the laptop towards her) Maybe one of these parents.

STAZIA

(sliding the laptop back towards him) I'll look at it tomorrow.

(She walks back off to ABBIE's basement)

WILL

Will you?

(she doesn't answer)

You're welcome.

STAZIA

Yeah yeah.

SCENE 5

(WILL is at the kitchen table, doing his taxes. In deep focus and agony. From behind him approaches HARRY STYLES, in an apron. He puts his hands over WILL's eyes from behind)

HARRY

Hey, gorgeous. Guess who?

WILL

Oh god, is it sex fantasy Harry Styles or domestic fantasy Harry Styles?

HARRY

(sighing) Everyone's always trying to put me in a box.

WILL

Well, whoever you are, I'm busy.

(HARRY takes his hands off WILL's eyes. WILL brings his attention back to the paperwork on the table, ignoring HARRY)

HARRY

Too busy to come cook with me?

WILL

Yes.

HARRY

You work too hard. Come dance with me while we wait for the water to boil.

(WILL says nothing)

Alright. I'll be over here making paella by myself.

WILL

No, you won't, because you're not real.

HARRY

Yet another solo career.

(HARRY walks over to the counter and starts grabbing various pots and ingredients in a slow, haphazard manner)

What is it about celebrity that captivates you, Will? The colossus whose footfalls dwarf the scale of his own understanding? Does taming me to this domestic form make you feel like you've finally reached the center of the wheel?

(WILL does his taxes)

Don't you want to know if celebrities have bigger dicks than other people?

(WILL's phone buzzes on the table, and he picks it up to read a text. He smiles to himself)

What's that?

WILL

Nothing.

(He types. He chuckles to himself.)

HARRY walks back over and sits in the chair opposite WILL)

HARRY

I thought you were busy.

WILL

It's just a quick—

(His phone buzzes again. He opens the message, smiling)

HARRY

What does Jeremy have to say?

WILL

None of your business.

HARRY

Let me help. I'll be Jeremy.

(He shifts his posture and voice to imitate JEREMY. He speaks aloud JEREMY's most recent text)

“Oh, you were watching?”

WILL

That's not what he sounds like.

(WILL texts a response. JEREMY texts back, and HARRY speaks JEREMY's response aloud)

HARRY

“How'd you like that fourth quarter?”

Basketball? You're texting about basketball?

WILL

So what?

HARRY

You're into sports now, are you?

WILL

It's fun to listen to him talk about it.

(WILL's phone buzzes)

HARRY

“What are you doing Thursday night? The Celtics are playing.”

(HARRY gapes)

Is he asking you to watch *with* him?

WILL

I don't know yet.

(WILL texts. JEREMY replies)

HARRY

Oh. He *is*.

WILL

It's not a big deal. It's basketball.

(JEREMY replies)

HARRY

“Your place?”

(HARRY opens his mouth in shock, and mouths “OH MY GOD” to WILL)

WILL

Guys hang out and watch sports. It's a thing.

HARRY

It's a very specific thing called a date. *You* have a date.

(WILL smiles and continues texting with JEREMY. HARRY comes around behind WILL and puts his hands on WILL's shoulders, resting his head on top of WILL's and reading his texts along with him. They relax into a casual intimacy)

God, he's fit, isn't he?

WILL

Yeah, he is.

HARRY

And funny, more funny than you think at first.

WILL

He doesn't smile when he makes jokes.

HARRY

Except when he does, just a little.

WILL

Just a little.

HARRY

Like that time at work, right?

WILL

Yeah.

HARRY

When you told him that joke that finally cracked him. He was standing over by the fridge.

WILL

I caught him smiling through the glass door.

HARRY

Like a rare bird.

(reacting to a text from JEREMY:)

He wants to eat *dinner* together.

WILL

Yeah.

HARRY

Maybe he offers you a bite from his plate. And then both your mouths have touched his fork.

WILL

Maybe.

HARRY

And then anything could happen.

WILL

Maybe.

(Something in HARRY's physicality shifts, and from this point forward he starts to progress gradually from fantasy to nightmare.)

HARRY

Do you think he knows?

(WILL goes cold. He knows exactly what HARRY means)

WILL

It doesn't matter.

HARRY

Doesn't it?

WILL

I've been careful.

HARRY

But even when you bind, people can tell.

WILL

Sometimes.

HARRY

It doesn't matter what you do. They're always going to figure it out.

WILL

It shouldn't matter. It's nothing to be ashamed of.

HARRY

How's he going to touch you? What's he going to think?

WILL

I didn't—we haven't even said it's a date.

HARRY

How's he supposed to want you when you don't want yourself?

WILL

Stop it.

(STAZIA rolls over on the couch, in the tv area, SL of the kitchen area—we didn't see she was there. She groans. WILL freezes his panic to talk to her. But HARRY clings to him still-- The casual intimacy has become a death grip. He slowly slides his hand down WILL's chest, while WILL and STAZIA talk)

STAZIA

What time is it?

WILL

It's almost 10:30.

(She groans)

STAZIA

Do we have food?

WILL

I bought more milk this morning if you want to get up and have breakfast before it's lunch time.

STAZIA

It's SATURDAY.

WILL

I know.

STAZIA

(sitting up) How long have you been up?

HARRY

You'll never be loved, not really.

WILL

Since 7:30, ish.

HARRY

And why should you be?

STAZIA

Oh my god how OLD are you?

WILL

Old as sin.

HARRY

You're just a red-hot ball of shame and acne and self-disgust.

(STAZIA rubs her eyes and looks over at WILL)

STAZIA

Hey, are you okay?

WILL

What? Yeah.

HARRY

Transition will never give you a cis body.

STAZIA

You look kind of fucked up.

HARRY

You'll never fuck and you'll never get fucked.

WILL

You shouldn't swear so much.

HARRY

You'll always be broken.

STAZIA

Messed up, whatever.

HARRY

Monster. Imposter.

WILL

I'm fine.

HARRY

You'll always be trans.

STAZIA

(clearly quoting something he's said to her before) Human emotion is nothing to be ashamed of.

WILL

I'm fine, Stazia, Jesus. I'm just doing taxes.

STAZIA

Ah, sure, fuck the government—I mean, *screw* the government.

(Satisfied, she starts checking her phone.)

WILL stares at the paperwork on the table)

HARRY

Who do you think you're fooling?

SCENE 6

(STAZIA is packing up her backpack for school. WILL waits impatiently by the door)

WILL

You're going to miss your bus.

STAZIA

You don't have to walk me.

WILL

It's on my way.

STAZIA

Well, if you're going to be up my butt about it, I'd rather you didn't.

WILL

Do you have everything?

STAZIA

Yes.

WILL

And don't forget—

STAZIA

Yes I have my stuff to go to Abbie's. Don't worry, I won't interrupt your big date.

(STAZIA starts making for the door)

Wait. Charger.

(She drops her backpack on the floor by the door, and hustles offstage. On top of her backpack sits her phone, which begins to ring once she is offstage)

WILL

(calling after her) Staz. Stazia. Your phone, Stazia.

(He picks up the phone and sees the caller ID. His face falls. STAZIA re-enters with her charger)

STAZIA

Oh my god stalker put it down.

WILL

It's mom.

(They stare at each other for a moment, while it rings. Then STAZIA snatches the phone from him, and darts back across the room, answering)

STAZIA

Hi.

Yeah, I'm about to leave for school.

No, we take the bus.

Don't open that—I'll come—no, mom, don't open that.

Yeah. Okay. I'll take care of it. Yes, I will take care of it.

I need to go, or I'll miss the bus.

Yeah, I text with him, he's my frickin brother.

(She flicks her eyes to WILL, who pretends not to be listening)

I don't know, I guess you'll have to ask him yourself.

Sure.

Okay I need to go, or I'll miss the bus.

Bye.

(She hangs up. She doesn't look at WILL)

WILL

What did she say?

STAZIA

I need to go pick up some mail from the house tonight—can you take me?

WILL

Sure. What is it?

STAZIA

(walking over and picking up her backpack, exasperated) It's a gun to shoot myself with—I'm going to miss the bus.

WILL

What does she want to ask me?

STAZIA

Will, I am literally dealing with enough right now, I do not need to be playing moderator between you and mom.

WILL

She won't ask me.

STAZIA

I know.

(STAZIA exits, WILL sighs and follows)

SCENE 7

(WILL is sitting waiting at the table, nervous. He's not dressed up, per se, but he's put together.

A knock at the door. He jumps up to open it, letting in JEREMY.

JEREMY is casual, carrying a six-pack of beer in one hand and a plastic bag of takeout in the other.)

JEREMY

Hey, Little Will!

WILL

Hey.

JEREMY

How are you doing? Are you pumped?

WILL

Oh yeah.

(JEREMY gives him a casual hug and moves past him into the space to look around)

JEREMY

Okay, okay, casa de William.

WILL

It's shitty, I know.

JEREMY

Nah, don't do that. Be proud of your space—it's nice. Where should I put these?

WILL

You can head over to the couch—I'll put the beer in the fridge.

(JEREMY hands him the six pack, but stops him before he can walk away with it)

JEREMY

Did you do something different with your hair?

WILL

What?

JEREMY

Your hair. It looks different.

WILL

I put horseshit in it.

(JEREMY stares at him)

Gel. I put some gel in it.

JEREMY

It looks nice.

(The moment is over. WILL walks away towards the fridge, embarrassed. When his back is turned, JEREMY cracks a smile and shakes his head)

Thanks for having me.

(JEREMY walks over to the couch by the tv)

WILL

Thanks for getting dinner—what do I owe you?

JEREMY

I got it, don't worry.

(WILL gives a look to the audience—that's kind of a date thing to do.)

JEREMY sits and WILL joins him. WILL grabs the remote and turns on the tv while JEREMY takes out the food)

JEREMY

Can't *believe* we have to work tomorrow.

WILL

I know.

JEREMY

What are your off days this week?

WILL

Sunday/Monday. What channel...?

JEREMY

Give me that.

(WILL hands JEREMY the remote. JEREMY points it at the tv and starts clicking. As he leans forward, his knee touches WILL's. When he leans back and puts the remote down, he doesn't move his knee away.)

WILL does a take out to the audience. He mouths "HIS KNEE," and points.

The guys settle in to watch the game, occasionally reacting or bantering. JEREMY's arm rests on the couch behind WILL, not quite touching his shoulders.

Across the stage, DSR, lights fade up on a brick wall—the back of the school—where GARRETT is leaning. He takes a hit from a vape pen.

STAZIA emerges from offstage right, carrying a plastic tub. She looks surprised to see GARRETT. He doesn't see her yet. Neither of them pays any attention to WILL and JEREMY in the background.)

STAZIA

Hey.

(GARRETT startles, and quickly pockets his vape pen)

GARRETT

(seeing it's her) Oh my god Stazia I thought you were a teacher.

STAZIA

They do tell me I'm mature for my age.

(They stare at each other for a moment.)

GARRETT

Do you mind if I...? *[keep vaping]*

STAZIA

Whatever, Garrett.

(She drops the tub and pulls two dirty chalkboard erasers from it. She starts clapping them together. GARRETT watches. STAZIA sees him watching)

What?

GARRETT

It just seems so old-timey to me. I didn't know people still did that.

STAZIA

You've never had detention with Mrs. Ross, apparently.

GARRETT

Never had detention at all.

STAZIA

Never cut math class? Never skipped assembly? Or just never been caught?

GARRETT

I don't do stuff like that.

STAZIA

Sure, you're a saint.

GARRETT

I just mean I don't mind school.

STAZIA

You're vaping at school right now.

GARRETT

That's on big nicotine, and the coolification of addiction, not me.

STAZIA

And do you feel cool?

GARRETT

Yeah, sure.

STAZIA

Well good for you.

(She claps erasers. They stand in silence.)

Across the stage, WILL and JEREMY start getting excited about something happening in the game—JEREMY grabs WILL's arm, and they watch in rowdy anticipation.

GARRETT works up his courage, then:)

GARRETT

Did I do something wrong? I want to say sorry, if I did something wrong.

STAZIA

No, Garrett, apparently you've never done anything wrong in your whole fricking life.

GARRETT

I just wanted to know if you were okay. You were out of school for like a whole week.

STAZIA

Your concern is noted.

(As STAZIA and GARRETT go icy quiet, JEREMY and WILL erupt into cheers. WILL is shaking JEREMY by the shoulders. Then, he realizes how into it he has gotten, and calms down. He chuckles, JEREMY smiles at him)

WILL

This doesn't suck.

JEREMY

I told you. Didn't I tell you?

WILL

You tell me a lot of things.

JEREMY

Well, you're a good listener.

(It's a half joke, but there's something vulnerable in it. WILL and JEREMY make eye contact. They're sitting very close to each other, but they don't withdraw.)

GARRETT has been searching for something to say, but he can't come up with anything. He makes to leave)

GARRETT

I'm just gonna...

STAZIA

(stopping him) I wasn't okay.

WILL

Are we...?

JEREMY

If you want to.

(WILL kisses JEREMY)

GARRETT

Are you okay now?

STAZIA

No.

(WILL and JEREMY break apart to examine each other's reactions. JEREMY touches WILL behind his ear and pulls him in to kiss him again)

GARRETT

Can I help?

(He means the erasers. He doesn't know what else to offer)

STAZIA

Knock yourself out.

(She hands him a pair of erasers. He starts clapping them. The dust hits him the face and he sputters and STAZIA giggles)

Yeah, you're *such* a bad boy.

GARRETT

Hey.

(He smiles)

I have never once claimed to be a bad boy.

(STAZIA chuckles. The Celtics score. JEREMY doesn't notice. WILL pulls back the slightest bit)

WILL

I think we missed a 3-pointer.

JEREMY

Whatever.

(They kiss again, still tentative, but getting bolder. WILL puts a hand on JEREMY's leg. JEREMY takes his hand into WILL's hair)

STAZIA

You shouldn't keep condoms loose in your bag, by the way. Where a pen can poke them, or whatever.

GARRETT

What?

STAZIA

You should keep them by the bed or in a hard case or something.

GARRETT

Okay.

STAZIA

I'm sure, you know, you have to be ready for sex whenever wherever with whoever, so maybe in a hard case would be better. But not just loose in your backpack.

GARRETT

That was—my brother gave that to me as a stupid joke, it's all I had.

STAZIA

You don't have a *supply*?

GARRETT

I told you Stazia I'm not seeing anyone else.

STAZIA

Are you seeing me?

GARRETT

I don't know, am I?

STAZIA

It had a hole in it, or something. The condom.

(He stops clapping the erasers)

GARRETT

What?

(JEREMY puts a hand on WILL's collarbone, his palm a little too close to WILL's chest for his comfort. WILL grabs JEREMY's hand and moves it around to his back)

JEREMY

Sorry.

WILL

It's okay, I just, uh, my chest...

GARRETT

What do you mean?

JEREMY

You don't have to explain.

GARRETT

Staz, you're not... ?

STAZIA

Not anymore.

WILL

No, I just, you should know.

STAZIA

I took care of it.

GARRETT

Like... *(lowering his voice)* an abortion?

WILL

I'm wearing a binder.

STAZIA

Yeah.

JEREMY

Okay.

GARRETT

Fuck.

STAZIA

Yeah.

WILL

Because I'm trans. I'm a trans man.

JEREMY

Yeah, cool, okay.

WILL

"Cool"?

JEREMY

I mean... I sort of...

WILL

What?

JEREMY

I sort of figured.

GARRETT

Do you need, like, money?

WILL

Oh.

STAZIA

That's your question?

GARRETT

What the fuck am I supposed to say?

STAZIA

I don't know.

JEREMY

Not cuz you—I just know a few trans folks, and you've kind of got...

GARRETT

I'm sorry. That sucks. I'm sorry.

STAZIA

Yeah, well, you should be. But, thanks.

(He starts clapping another pair of erasers. She joins him)

WILL

What?

JEREMY

Just, the trans guy puberty voice.

WILL

Ah.

JEREMY

It's not a big deal to me. I'm not just gay, I'm bi so—

(STAZIA turns her head at this and starts watching)

WILL

What does that have to do with it?

JEREMY

I just meant, like, whatever situation you've got going on— I have experience.

WILL

I told you the situation.

JEREMY

I just meant—

WILL

I get what you meant. It's fine.

(Silence)

JEREMY

Do you want to—

WILL

Let's just watch the game.

(They turn to the television, no part of them touching.)

Silence on stage as STAZIA and GARRETT finish with the erasers)

STAZIA

That's it.

GARRETT

Sweet, nice job.

STAZIA

I'm gonna—

GARRETT

Can I buy you chocolate, or drive you to the mall, or something? You could come over and play with my dog, if you want, I don't even have to be there.

STAZIA

You don't have to do that. You're not *beholden* to me, or anything.

GARRETT

I'm your friend.

STAZIA

My friend?

GARRETT

Your special friend?

STAZIA

Barf.

GARRETT

Even if I hadn't...

STAZIA

Knocked me up?

GARRETT

Even if I didn't have to. I don't know. I like you. I want to help.

STAZIA

I don't want your help. I just want to be normal—I want this to never have happened.

GARRETT

Well, if this hadn't happened, wouldn't we still be hanging out?

STAZIA

But it did happen.

GARRETT

So...

STAZIA

I know I sound fucking crazy, okay?

GARRETT

I didn't say that.

STAZIA

It's just, it happened, and it only happened to me, and I was so alone. I don't know how to go back to all this. Everyone else out here talking about school and Instagram and who's hooking up with who—it makes me feel fucking insane. Like, why would you even want to be around me? What would we even do? We're not going to hook up—

GARRETT

We don't have to.

STAZIA

Are we supposed to just go to the park?

GARRETT

If you want to.

STAZIA

I don't know what I want to do.

GARRETT

Why don't we just try something, and if you don't like it, you can go home?

STAZIA

Can we break something? I want to break something.

GARRETT

I have a punching bag in my basement.

STAZIA

No shit?

GARRETT

Yeah, my dad used to box.

STAZIA

I guess I could try that.

GARRETT

Okay.

SCENE 8

STAZIA

The worst thing about it was the sex was actually good. I know your first time is supposed to suck, and boys are terrible, and teenagers are idiots. But Garrett and I... we kind of had it. I'm not saying we were porn stars or anything—we weren't *skilled*. But we were learning. And *I* was learning. I was understanding myself a little better each time. I had these moments where I wasn't separate parts; I was one thing. I was me.

And it was like God saw that and had to smite me for it. Like I had finally felt good for the first time in my life, and I had to die for it. What a stupid fucking slut I was, for finally feeling powerful and unafraid.

For a week after I took the test and I saw that stupid plus sign, I would lay awake every night feeling like I was in a horror movie. What's the one where the alien bursts out of someone's chest? It was like that. It was *inside* me, there was nowhere I could go to get away from it. Betrayed by my own fucking body. By myself. I fantasized about dying. I really wanted to just die so I wouldn't have to deal with it. But I didn't die. I told my parents Abbie was picking me up and I walked five miles to Planned Parenthood.

SCENE 9

(HARRY STYLES musical interlude. Life occurs softly on stage behind him as he sits at the front of the stage and plays an acoustic version of “Golden”—or another song, at the director’s discretion. STAZIA is in class. JEREMY works at the gas station. WILL is loose on the stage, not anywhere in particular, just alone. He tries to sing along with HARRY, but his voice cracks. In the end, he sits next to HARRY and just listens. When HARRY finishes, he leaves WILL alone on the edge of the stage)

SCENE 10

(WILL sits on the edge of the stage. STAZIA enters, back from school, a little bit of a spring in her step)

STAZIA

Hey, jerk, how was work?

(WILL doesn't answer. He stares out beyond the audience. STAZIA drops her stuff and takes off her shoes)

Didn't you have work today? I thought you had work?

(WILL doesn't answer. STAZIA goes to the fridge)

If you're allowed to skip work, I don't see why I have to go to school.

(Seeing nothing of substance in the fridge, she goes to the cabinet)

School was okay today actually. If you can believe it. We're reading *The Great Gatsby* in English and it's kind of gay. You read it in Highschool, right? I'm sure you were all over that.

(She grabs a box of goldfish and sits at the table. She sees WILL properly for the first time)

Dude, what's up with you today? You still bummed about your bad date?

WILL

(not looking over) Mm.

STAZIA

You'll find someone else. Fuck that guy.

(He doesn't say anything. After a moment of hesitation, STAZIA brings the box of goldfish and walks over to him.)

You want some goldfish?

(He shakes his head. She sits next to him, and waits)

WILL

Do you remember, in the summer when we were kids, we used to spray each other with the hose and chase each other around the house?

STAZIA

I seem to recall you mostly spraying me.

WILL

Well, you're just so sprayable.

STAZIA

Jerk.

WILL

And I always wore boys' swim-trunks and swim-shirts as a kid, you remember?

STAZIA

I'm still shocked mom and dad let you do that.

WILL

I think they thought it was harmless until I started growing boobs.

STAZIA

At which point they started owning your body, right?

WILL

(he laughs) Does mom still do that thing to you where she tells you not to wear something, but in the *most* passive aggressive way?

STAZIA

Like, oh, *that's* that you're wearing to school today? No, no, it's fine with *me*, as long as *you* don't mind that people can see your bra through your shirt. Whatever message *you* want to send is fine with *me*.

WILL

Right! I think that's why my transition bothers her so much. It's not just my body to her. It's ours.

STAZIA

Yeah.

WILL

Puberty killed summer for me. It used to be free and exciting and scandalous. But once I grew into this body... every Spring I can feel it coming like death approaching. Heat just puts you in your body, you know? In winter you can hide, but summer is this nightmare parade of human bodies. You have to be seen.

It's the same thing with boys. Dating. I want it. I'm fricking ravenous for it, in a way I never was before I came out. But I want it to be the summers of my childhood. And I can't have that, because I'm trapped in this body that ruins everything. It ruins everything, and I can't get out of it.

STAZIA

Isn't there a surgery you can get?

WILL

Yeah, I've got an appointment for top surgery. That will help.

STAZIA

That's for the, uh—

WILL

The chest, yeah.

STAZIA

When is it?

WILL

7 months, give or take.

STAZIA

Oof.

WILL

And that's if I can figure out how to pay for it by then.

STAZIA

How much is it?

WILL

Too much.

(STAZIA sees her brother's pain, in a way she hasn't before)

STAZIA

By the way, I thought about it, and I decided I'm going to apply for that baby-sitting job.

WILL

You don't have to do that.

STAZIA

I'm doing it for me. Get my feet under me, like you said. Just thought I should let you know.

WILL

Well. Thank you.

STAZIA

For letting you know.

WILL

For letting me know.

(He smiles. She's a good kid)

STAZIA

You really like this Jeremy guy, huh?

WILL

I did, yeah.

STAZIA

If he apologized, would you give him another chance?

WILL

He already has.

(He unlocks his phone and hands it to STAZIA. She reads JEREMY's text. She scrolls. It's long)

STAZIA

This is really good.

WILL

I know.

STAZIA

It's... kind of cute.

WILL

I know.

STAZIA

What are you going to say?

WILL

I don't know. I'm not even upset with him. I'm just mortified.

STAZIA

Why? You didn't do anything wrong.

WILL

I'm embarrassed.

STAZIA

Of what?

(He shakes his head. He doesn't want to say)

I'm not gonna judge you.

WILL

Being trans. Having this stupid body. Going through puberty, again, in my twenties. Being insane about everything.

STAZIA

That's not very *woke* of you, William.

WILL

It feels like something he can *tolerate* about me, but not *love*. Like, I'm sure he'd prefer if I were just a cis guy. And everything could be easier.

STAZIA

You're you, Will. If he wanted that, he'd be wanting somebody else.

WILL

What if I want to be someone else?

STAZIA

Tough shit. Text him back.

(She hands the phone back to him, he takes it, and is about to say something when he is interrupted by:

A knock at the door.)

SCENE 11

(Startled, WILL pockets his phone and gets up to answer the door. He looks through the peephole and turns back to STAZIA, alarmed. In a hushed voice:

WILL

It's mom.

STAZIA

What's she doing here?

WILL

I don't know. You didn't tell her you were staying here, did you?

STAZIA

Yeah, cuz I'm an idiot.

(From the other side of the door:)

MOTHER

I know you're home, I can see the light is on.

WILL

(yelling) One minute.

(WILL shoos STAZIA with his hand)

STAZIA

I'm going, I'm going.

(STAZIA shuffles off to WILL's room. She is no longer visible to WILL or to her MOTHER, but the audience can see her sitting and listening to what is about to unfold

Unassumingly, HARRY STYLES wanders out into the kitchen, where he jumps up to sit on the counter. He begins casually eating an apple with one hand, watching what is about to unfold. He has an airhorn in his other hand.

WILL opens the door. There stands his MOTHER)

WILL

Hi.

MOTHER

Hello.

WILL

Is something wrong? Is Dad okay?

MOTHER

You're not going to invite me in?

(WILL sighs, then opens the door more fully, and gestures for her to enter)

WILL

Come on in.

(She enters, looks around)

MOTHER

So, this is where you've been hiding.

WILL

You have my address.

MOTHER

It's... nice.

WILL

Thanks.

MOTHER

And you, you look...

(He waits for her to say more. When it's clear she's not going to, he speaks)

WILL

You wanna take a seat?

(She sits at the kitchen table)

Water?

MOTHER

Thank you.

(WILL goes to grab her a cup of water)

MOTHER

It's bigger than I pictured.

WILL

Thought I was in some ditch at the side of the road, did you?

MOTHER

Something like that.

WILL

Well, sorry to disappoint.

MOTHER

One bedroom?

WILL

Yup.

MOTHER

So where does Stazia sleep?

(He freezes)

WILL

What do you mean?

MOTHER

Do you share the bed, or does she sleep on the couch?

WILL

Stazia's staying with Abbie's family, isn't she?

MOTHER

Come on, [deadname]

(Every time MOTHER deadnames WILL, HARRY STYLES blasts his airhorn to cover the sound of it. WILL reacts to the sound, MOTHER does not. After this first blast, HARRY gives a salute to the audience.)

I'm not stupid.

WILL

Don't call me that.

MOTHER

I spoke with Abbie's mother.

WILL

If she's not there, then I have no idea where she is.

MOTHER

Is she here now?

WILL

She's not staying here.

MOTHER

I'm not upset about it—I'd rather she slept here than on the street. Is she here now?

WILL

No. She's out.

MOTHER

Good. I want to talk to you.

(He sets the water in front of her, and sits across the table)

WILL

You've got 15 minutes. Then I need to get ready for work.

MOTHER

Work?

WILL

Evening shift at the gas station.

MOTHER

You work at a gas station?

WILL

15 minutes. Talk.

MOTHER

We both want what's best for Stazia.

WILL

Sure.

MOTHER

She needs to come home, [deadname].

WILL

Don't call me that.

MOTHER

You can't afford to support her financially. That's a fact.

WILL

You don't know that.

(She gives him a look)

If you're so concerned about it, you could lend her some money.

MOTHER

Are you going to go to her next parent/teacher conference? Are you going to help her apply to college next Fall? Are you going to claim her as a dependent? Think long term, [deadname], it's just not realistic.

WILL

I'm sure we'll figure it out.

MOTHER

Are you listening to yourself? You'll figure it out?

WILL

Yes, we'll figure it out.

MOTHER

Honey. You're 21. You're not supposed to be raising a teenager. It's okay to admit that.

WILL

What are you scared is going to happen to her, mom? That she'll turn out like me?

(She doesn't answer)

Well, despite that vote of confidence, I am, in fact, surviving.

MOTHER

[Deadname]—

WILL

You know what, you can just leave now if you're not going to call me the right name.

MOTHER

I understand there are certain choices you feel you have to make. And you can live your life however you want, but you can't expect me to stop calling you the name I gave you.

WILL

Actually, I can.

(He gets up, and he opens the door)

It was always your roof, your rules, right? And if I couldn't follow them, I could just get out and go die in a ditch? Well, my ditch, my rules.

(He gestures for her to leave. She stares him down)

MOTHER

Do you want custody of her? Is that really what you want? You want to be the one who has to put up with all of her crap?

WILL

She came to me. And I don't throw out my family.

MOTHER

We didn't kick her out.

WILL

I wasn't talking about her.

MOTHER

Oh, don't be such a victim. You made your choice.

WILL

You think that was a choice you gave me?

MOTHER

Whatever you have to tell yourself.

WILL

Are we doing this? Do you want to do this, or do you want to talk about Stazia?

MOTHER

You brought it up. Forgive me if I defend myself.

(WILL lets the door close)

WILL

If I had stayed with you, I would be dead.

MOTHER

That's dramatic.

WILL

Does it ever cross your mind that maybe, just maybe, I might know more about my own experience than you do? Or would it shatter your sense of self to even *consider* you might be wrong about something?

MOTHER

Have you ever considered that, despite your 21 years of wisdom, you might be wrong?

WILL

Yeah, pretty often, actually. But your reality was drowning me. And now I can breathe. So. I guess I don't really care who's right.

MOTHER

Do you really think this will make you happy?

WILL

I do.

(He stares her down. She absorbs)

MOTHER

I don't understand you.

WILL

I know.

MOTHER

I never wanted this. It broke my heart, what happened with you.

WILL

I know.

MOTHER

I can't lose another child.

(WILL softens, just a little. He walks back over to the table)

WILL

If you really want to keep Stazia in your life, maybe you should reflect a little on why she felt she had to leave. Maybe there's something you could do to make this right.

MOTHER

I didn't do anything.

WILL

Come on. Work with me here.

MOTHER

How am I supposed to react when she...

(She shakes her head)

WILL

When she what?

MOTHER

Come on. Don't make me say it.

(He looks at her blankly. She realizes he doesn't know)

She didn't tell you.

WILL

Tell me what?

MOTHER

About the abortion.

(She didn't. WILL makes eye contact with STAZIA. She doesn't know what to say. WILL pushes forward)

WILL

Oh, that. Of course she did.

MOTHER

It's okay. She lied to me too.

WILL

She doesn't have to tell me anything she doesn't want to. My love isn't conditional.

(MOTHER chuckles)

What?

MOTHER

Nothing.

WILL

What?

MOTHER

You think you're so grown up. But you don't know the first thing about what it takes to be a parent.

WILL

What does it take?

MOTHER

You have to be willing to set boundaries.

WILL

And how has that worked out for you?

(She gives him an icy look)

MOTHER

I could make her come home, if I wanted, you know.

WILL

What, you're going to call the cops?

MOTHER

I could. This is kidnapping, isn't it, technically?

WILL

I don't think you'll like what comes out in court.

(The threat hangs in the air)

MOTHER

You won't go to court. You can't afford it.

WILL

Test me, I dare you.

(MOTHER blinks first. She reaches into her purse)

MOTHER

I bet that sex change you want is pretty expensive.

WILL

I'm handling it.

(She pulls out her checkbook)

MOTHER

How much?

(He just stares at her)

You won't have to hear from any of us ever again. How much?

WILL

Get out.

MOTHER

[deadname]—

WILL

Get out.

(He opens the door again. This time, he refuses to make eye contact. He just holds the door open and waits)

MOTHER

Be reasonable. Will. Be reasonable.

(He just waits. Until she gets up and walks out the door. She turns back in the doorway)

This isn't the last we're going to—

(He shuts the door on her.

He locks it. He waits until he hears her walk away.

He exhales in relief, walks back to the table, and collapses in the chair, facing the door.

After a moment, STAZIA emerges from the bedroom. He hears her, but doesn't turn around)

WILL

How much of that did you have to hear?

(STAZIA walks up behind him and hugs him tightly from behind)

So, basically all of it?

STAZIA

Pretty much.

WILL

Sorry about that.

STAZIA

He hit me. Bad. When I told them. And she didn't say a word.

WILL

I'm sorry.

STAZIA

I can't go back there.

WILL

You don't have to.

SCENE 12

JEREMY

Hey, I know you probably don't want to hear from me right now, and I had such a great plan to be the cool guy and wait for you to text me first, but I just needed to say this. I'm sorry.

I shouldn't have said what I said about being bi, or any of that. I know how it sounded—like I don't think you're a *real* guy, and I need to be into women to be with you. That's messed up, and it's not what I meant. What I should have said was: I don't mind that you're trans. I care, because it's a part of you, and it's going to affect how we relate to each other. But I don't *care* care—you feel me? I'm down for whatever you've got going on, because I like you. That's what I wish I would have said.

I know I'm still learning, and it's not your job to teach me. But if you have the patience for a guy on his journey, I'd love to try again. I'm sure you're on your own journey, and maybe we could walk side by side for a bit.

Or, if not, please just come back to work. Randall is getting restless, and I know you don't want to lose your job. I promise I'll be professional, and I won't even look at your ass. Or if you want me to look for another job, I will. It was my mistake, you shouldn't pay for it.

Let me know what you think.

Sorry again.

SCENE 13

(STAZIA and GARRETT are sitting at the kitchen table, doing homework. WILL is peering into the fridge)

WILL

Can I convince you to stay for dinner this time, Garrett?

GARRETT

That's very generous, Mr. ... Will, sir.

WILL

Ooh, "sir"? How can I trade you in for this kid, Stazia?

STAZIA

(to GARRETT) You don't have to butter him up. He doesn't have any power over us.

WILL

(brandishing a banana from the fridge at her) Go to your room, young lady!

STAZIA

This *is* my room.

WILL

And think about what you've done.

STAZIA

You are so embarrassing.

WILL

Garrett, you have to stay for dinner. I need to thank you for keeping Stazia out of the house so much.

STAZIA

Weak. That was weak.

GARRETT

I would love to stay for dinner, but I should probably get going.

STAZIA

What? Boo, stay.

GARRETT

Sorry, I have to practice a little before dinner.

WILL

Practice?

GARRETT

Saxophone. We have a concert next weekend.

(GARRETT starts packing up his stuff)

WILL

That's amazing. Are you good?

GARRETT

(shrugging) I'm pretty good.

STAZIA

He has two solos.

WILL

Two solos? Wow. I knew you were cool, but I didn't know you were that cool.

STAZIA

Don't be a pedophile, William.

WILL

(to STAZIA) Are we going to the concert? We should go.

STAZIA

I'm going. You're a little old for high-school concerts.

WILL

They'll let me in once I tell them I'm Garrett's future brother-in-law.

STAZIA

(actually blushing) Oh my god, shut your whore mouth.

GARRETT

I hope you and my brother are very happy together.

WILL

Ohhh a zinger from Garrett.

(GARRETT stands to leave, smiling)

GARRETT

Thanks for having me.

WILL

Of course. You're welcome whenever.

(STAZIA walks GARRETT over to the door)

STAZIA

Text me when you get home?

GARRETT

Sure. Don't forget to ask Abbie about this weekend.

STAZIA

Already texted her.

(STAZIA opens the door for him)

WILL

I am closing my eyes. I am covering my eyes. I am not watching you kiss goodbye.

STAZIA

Shut up.

(She kisses GARRETT on the cheek)

Bye.

GARRETT

Bye.

(He leaves, she shuts the door)

WILL

(calling after him) Bye Garrett! Use protection!

STAZIA

Stop saying that.

WILL

I will stop saying it when it stops being hilarious.

STAZIA

You are literally insufferable.

WILL

What do you want for dinner?

STAZIA

Can we do spaghetti again?

WILL

Sure. Red sauce?

STAZIA

Yeah. Thanks.

(STAZIA settles in at the table and keeps working on her homework. WILL starts cooking. It's not domestic bliss, but it's home)

END PLAY

THE PLAYWRIGHT SPEAKS: *Ever since I started HRT, I knew I had to write about puberty—about my first wrong one and my second right one, and what they taught me about gender, sexuality, and the self. When your body transforms, so does everything else: your emotional life, your social relationships, your sex life, everything. Your whole day changes, from showering in the morning to walking home from the subway at night. Puberty is the fiery hormone crucible in which our very selves are forged! And I got to experience it from both sides.*

*So, I wrote this play about a twenty-something boy in his second puberty, and a teenage girl in her first—how their changing bodies, genders, and sex lives take them first further from each other and then ultimately closer together. And I wrote it with a non-traditional structure where the private home space, the public social space, and the intimate fantasy space bleed together. This style, where space collapses on stage, is deeply inspired by the work of Deb Margolin, especially her play *Turquoise*—though I believe I have made it my own. With this story told in this style, I hope to show what I've found to be true about our bodies: that they cannot be separated from our minds, our social relationships, or our standing in society, and that when they change, everything does.*

AUTHOR BIO: Ben Klebanoff (he/him/his) is a playwright and social worker living in Manhattan. Ben believes that the self is an act of storytelling, and that the more types of stories we have available to us, the more whole we will be. So, he writes a lot of weird gay stuff. Like this play.